

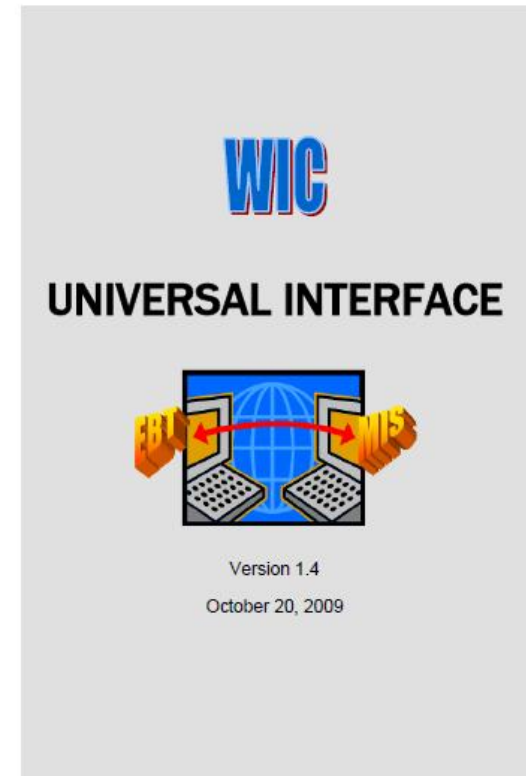
EBT-MIS Universal Interface

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Universal Interface

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- What is it?
- What is it not?
- Why is it needed?
- How does it work?
- MIS or EBT Function?
- What is the status of the specification?



The Premise

- MIS and EBT systems need to communicate with each other to:
 - Establish / maintain accounts, benefits, and cards
 - Share data on authorized retailers and UPCs/PLUs
 - Reconcile benefits and payments
- States do not want to use two different systems to perform these functions or access data, they prefer to access EBT functions/data using the MIS as the user interface (UI)

What problem are we trying to solve?

- MIS updates are costly and take time and effort
- Up to this point, EBT interfaces have been customized to each unique MIS and are not necessarily transferable
- In the current environment, if one of the systems is replaced, either the MIS, the EBT system or both will have to be updated to accommodate the other
- State Agencies should have the flexibility to change their MIS or their EBT system without worrying about costly interface changes

The Anticipated Results

- Simplifies the process to interface systems
- Reduces cost of implementation
- Reduces time associated with interfacing
- Allows for State Agencies to more easily change MIS and EBT systems or vendors without costly and time consuming changes

What is it?

- The document provides a set of functional requirements that describe what functions can be supported and the minimum set of data that needs to be transmitted between the systems to perform the function
- It allows an MIS to interface with any EBT system regardless of the technology or outsourced provider (if applicable)

What is it not?

- Not a detailed specification
- Not required to be implemented within existing MIS-EBT interfaces

How does it Work?



- Interfaces are a series of messages or files sent from one system with an anticipated response from the other system
- Example:
 - MIS sends a message requesting transaction history from the EBT system. The key data element is the household ID
 - The EBT system receives the message and looks up the household ID
 - The EBT system sends back a message with the transaction history associated with that household
 - The MIS displays and/or prints the data

MIS or EBT Function?

Challenges

- Which system is the master of the data?
- Two different philosophies:
 - Let each system handle the data that is natural to itself
 - Put as much functionality into the MIS so that the State Agency can maintain control

MIS or EBT Function?

Guiding Philosophy

- Promote portability between EBT and MIS systems
- Minimize the amount of data exchange
- Minimize points of failure
- Minimize potential data synchronization issues
- Let each system deal with data that is “natural” to itself when possible
- Let system with most data to support a feature implement the feature when possible
- Maintain a seamless user experience



MIS or EBT Function?

Functional Area	EBT DB of Record	MIS DB of Record	NUPC DB of Record	User Interface
Account Maintenance		X		MIS
Benefit Maintenance		X		MIS
Cardholder/Card Maintenance	X	X		Either
View EBT Balance / Transaction History	X			Either
Retailer Maintenance		X		MIS
Retailer Bank Maintenance	X			EBT

MIS or EBT Function?

Functional Area	EBT DB of Record	MIS DB of Record	NUPC DB of Record	User Interface
Category/Subcategory Maintenance			X	NUPC
UPC/PLU Maintenance			X	NUPC
MAR Calculations and Maintenance	X	X		Either
Adjustments / Payments via ACH		X		MIS
Reconciliation (MIS-EBT Auto-Reconciliation)		X		MIS
Redemption Batch File	X			MIS

MIS or EBT Function?

Functional Area	EBT DB of Record	MIS DB of Record	NUPC DB of Record	User Interface
Financial Settlement and Reconciliation	X			EBT
Card Inventory Management	X	X		Either
LA / Clinic Maintenance		X		MIS
EBT Security Role Maintenance	X	X		Both

Current Status

- Version 1.4 was release in November 2009 for comment
 - Approximately 50 comments were received
 - Comments were received from Regional Offices, State Agencies, EBT processors and technical assistance contractors
- Comments were incorporated into the document and other updates were made to provide more explanation about the use and purpose of the document
- The document is currently being reviewed internally, expect to have a draft for public review by the end of November and a final version by early 2011
- There are development efforts underway that are using the Universal Interface in the interface design

Conclusion

- The universal interface is anticipated to streamline the process to connect with MIS and EBT systems
- A standard interface approach will hopefully save time and money in implementing EBT or when State Agencies change MIS or EBT systems down the road
- We listened, the document has been updated to allow for more flexibility in implementation
- The specification is still in draft, but a more final version is anticipated by the end of the year